

July 3, 2018

Members Toronto East York Community Council
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Re: Development Proposals in the Toronto Junction

Agenda Items No. % EY 32.2 2978-2988 Dundas Street West and 406-408 Pacific Avenue - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Applications

TE34.8 2639 Dundas Street West - Zoning Amendment Application - Final Report

TE 34.23 2706, 2708, 2710, 2720, and 2730 Dundas Street West - Zoning Amendment Application - Request for Directions Report

We are taking the unusual step of writing simultaneously to two community Councils regarding the future of the Junction Neighbourhood, specifically the main streets at its heart, Dundas, Keele and Annette. We are hoping that Council will put in place a holding bylaw under the Ontario Heritage Act to allow completion of the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Phase I planning before new development irrevocably changes the historic character of the area.

For years, local residents have been requesting an HCD to protect this most important neighbourhood. Because The Junction was once an independent municipality it contains all elements, relatively intact, of its historic fabric. At long last, City Council has voted to make The Junction HCD a priority, and it is anticipated that the study and plan process will begin very shortly. Unfortunately, the delay in starting has put the City in the difficult position of facing four separate development applications without adequate heritage policies in place to measure the development proposals' compatibility with the historic fabric.

ACO Toronto has taken a particular interest in the future of the Junction. During the winter and spring of 2018, ACO Toronto worked with Ryerson University's Urban Planning Department students to explore The Junction neighbourhood, taking a closer look into The Junction's rich architectural history. Their findings recognized the Junction's uniqueness in its collection of fine-grained, rhythmic, strikingly individual architectural buildings. These buildings host a number of independent businesses that are the backbone of this community. New development tends to push out these smaller businesses due to the sky-rocketing rents and larger floor plans that are usually only more affordable for larger companies. The Junction is a living, breathing, vibrant area and new development proposal need to consider and capture what makes this community unique and special. The indicators the students selected showed that the existing community has a multitude of activities within the older building stock which have significant value. Any major redevelopments risk eroding the significant physical, social and economic value that is unique to this area.

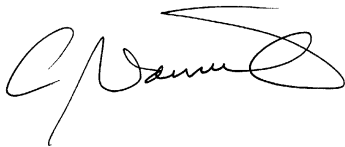
So often, the success of an area created by the incremental investment of local entrepreneurs attracts larger scale investment, setting the stage for the main streets' demise. In cities around the world, conservation districts play a role in shaping development to fit and keep what made the area attractive. Toronto is rapidly losing the 19th century commercial fabric that has been the secret of its success for over

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a century. Leaving the Junction to the roulette wheel of development applications will lead to the sterilization of one of the city's last surviving commercial strips.

While the City will be challenged to complete the necessary research and public process to complete both the HCD study and plan within the one year holding period, with community collaboration it can be done. For example, Harbord Village HCD Phase One was completed in one year. ACO Toronto is prepared to continue to devote our scarce resources to research support. We need Toronto City Council to hit the pause button and create a time window to do the planning needed to keep one of Toronto's most interesting communities for the future to enjoy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Nasmith', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Catherine Nasmith, OAA, FRAIC, CAHP
President ACO Toronto

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